

CORRECTED TRANSCRIPT

Interview with **GLADYS MACK**
Interviewed by Tom Sherwood

Gladys Mack was employed by Mayor Walter Washington as Deputy Budget Director in 1978 and so could play no role in the mayoral election. Her husband, Julius, was a strong Barry supporter. Gladys was one of Mayor Barry's first cabinet appointments as Assistant City Administrator for Budget. She served Mayor Barry for 12 years in a variety of senior positions. She went on to serve as Director of the United Planning Organization for 16 years. In 2003, she was appointed to the DC Hall of Fame for Community Service.

Date of Interview: August 21, 2015

[Begin audio file part 1 of 2.]

INTERVIEWER: I'm Tom Sherwood. I'm a reporter for Channel 4, the NBC station here in Washington.

And you, Gladys, are?

GLADYS MACK: I'm Gladys Mack. I am a resident of Washington, D.C. I'm a retired executive with the District of Columbia government and the United Planning Organization, a private, nonprofit organization.

INTERVIEWER: And are you a native Washingtonian?

GLADYS MACK: I am not. I was born in Rock Hill, South Carolina. I left South Carolina, came to college in Baltimore, Maryland, at Morgan State University. And my desire upon graduating was to return to South Carolina and become a teacher like my mother.

INTERVIEWER: But that didn't happen. You came to Washington. How did that happen?

GLADYS MACK: Well, I came to Washington because—well, let me say I majored in business education, and I was going to teach business subjects. So, I learned clerical skills because that was what I was going to be teaching in North Carolina, which is where I actually ended up getting a job, but the Federal recruiters came to the campus, they were looking for—

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember what year this was?

GLADYS MACK: This was in the year 1955. They were looking for business majors to come and do secretarial jobs in the Federal Government. Four of my classmates took jobs at the Housing and Home Finance Agency, which is now HUD, the Department of Housing and—Housing—

INTERVIEWER: Urban.

GLADYS MACK: —and Urban Development. We were—when the four of us came to the agency, we were paraded around to various offices, and all of those offices had openings. I ended up getting a job in the Office of the Budget, and the supervisor—

INTERVIEWER: Executive Office, Office of the Budget, right?

GLADYS MACK: Executive Office, right, of the Office of the Budget. And the supervisor said—she tells me because she liked my smile. So, you never know what's going to—

INTERVIEWER: You should see some of those budget agency directors who didn't like your smile at all.

GLADYS MACK: I saw plenty of those.

[Laughter.]

INTERVIEWER: So where did you first work?

GLADYS MACK: I first worked—

INTERVIEWER: Federal agency.

GLADYS MACK: Federal agency—

INTERVIEWER: At HUD.

GLADYS MACK: That was HUD, the agency is now HUD.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

GLADYS MACK: I was there for—actually, I was at HUD for 10 years, and the Equal Opportunity agency was just opening up.

INTERVIEWER: OEO [Office of Equal Opportunity].

GLADYS MACK: OEO. And there was a job opportunity there. I applied for it. I got that job. And that was in the headquarters of OEO.

INTERVIEWER: For people who don't know, of course, this was the time of the [President] Lyndon Johnson administration—

GLADYS MACK: Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: —and the activist Federal Government. It must have been an exciting time.

GLADYS MACK: Oh, absolutely. It was the Lyndon Johnson Great Society, and which is one of the few Federal programs that has existed over these almost 60 years, and which was recently celebrated. So, it was a very exciting opportunity, and it offered a lot of potential.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Good.

GLADYS MACK: It offered a lot of potential for poor people because the objective was—it was named the War on Poverty.

INTERVIEWER: So where did you live? When you came to Washington, where did you live?

GLADYS MACK: I came to Washington, and I moved to the Rhode Island Plaza. I was on Rhode Island Avenue in Northeast. It was the new place to be for the young up-and-coming African American people in my generation.

INTERVIEWER: Would you like to tell us how old you were then?

GLADYS MACK: I was 21 when I came to—when I graduated and came to Washington.

INTERVIEWER: Rhode Island Avenue and what?

GLADYS MACK: 13th and Rhode Island.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, good.

GLADYS MACK: Yeah, 13th and Rhode Island.

INTERVIEWER: Now there's a big Home Depot a few blocks down close into town.

GLADYS MACK: Exactly. Exactly.

INTERVIEWER: A big giant one.

GLADYS MACK: And unfortunately, that apartment building, which served the community for 20, 30 years was demolished, and that intersection, that corner of 13th and Rhode Island, on the northwest—northeast corner, it's still vacant, one of the few properties in D.C. that's vacant these days.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, good. All right. So, and then you were there. And we don't have to tell your whole history, but I'm just trying to get people a sense of when they hear you speak of things, that they know that you have been here, you have been on the ground. What was local Washington like then? This is a few years before the Martin Luther King riots in 1968.

GLADYS MACK: Right. Well, let me talk a little bit about the Federal setting that I came into, and then I'll talk about local Washington. When the four of us were recruited to the Federal agency, we were, as I say, paraded for jobs, but the recruiters had also been to high schools in West Virginia, and a cadre of people from there was also paraded around, and so our competition, our African American graduates, were competing with graduates from high school in West Virginia. So, when I arrived at the HUD office, there were no African American secretaries who did not have a college degree.

INTERVIEWER: Wow.

[Laughter.]

GLADYS MACK: This was in 1955.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, good.

GLADYS MACK: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: All right. So, you were—what was Washington locally like in the '60s prior to the King assassination?

GLADYS MACK: Well, this was also, remember, prior to the 1964 *Board v.*—

INTERVIEWER: Board, do you mean Board—

GLADYS MACK: The Education decision [the Supreme Court decision in *Brown vs. Board of Education*].

INTERVIEWER: That was 1954.

GLADYS MACK: 1954. This—and I was '55.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

GLADYS MACK: So I came 1 year after that.

INTERVIEWER: Right. But you were in Washington. You worked in Fed you said for 10 years.

GLADYS MACK: Right, exactly.

INTERVIEWER: So in that period of time, that would be 1965.

GLADYS MACK: Exactly. Right.

INTERVIEWER: So what was Washington like in the '60s after you had been here 10 years?

GLADYS MACK: The '60s. Okay.

INTERVIEWER: The Kennedy—because "Camelot" had ended abruptly because of the assassination.

GLADYS MACK: Exactly, in '63.

INTERVIEWER: Lyndon Johnson's Great Society was in full force.

GLADYS MACK: Right.

INTERVIEWER: Voting Rights Act. But what was the feeling in Washington like? Was it integrated? Was it segregated? Was it—

GLADYS MACK: Well, Washington was very much segregated at the time based on just how people behaved, the interaction. The African Americans sort of had their own places of entertainment—

INTERVIEWER: U Street?

GLADYS MACK: U Street was thriving at the time, and all the big performers would come to U Street to the Howard Theater. And I remember Pearl Bailey [African-American actress and singer] and her husband lived here. It was a very exciting time. And there were incredible African American businesses. There was a photographer on U Street, I can't remember the name, a celebrated photographer. It was nice restaurants, it was a very—

INTERVIEWER: Lee's Flowers were there, too.

GLADYS MACK: Yes. Yes. Exactly.

INTERVIEWER: Lee's Flower Shop there.

GLADYS MACK: And it's still there.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, it's still there.

GLADYS MACK: Yeah, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, good. So, then where were you—we're going to get to Mayor Barry's campaign, but I'm just trying to set the stage for what was happening in the city. And were you here in Washington when the riots occurred?

GLADYS MACK: Oh, absolutely. The riots were when the—when the riots occurred, I was living—I had—I got married after I was here for about 3 years, and my family and I were living in Northeast Washington.

INTERVIEWER: What community? Do you remember?

GLADYS MACK: We were in the Brookland pretty much.

INTERVIEWER: Brookland. Don't say "Brooklyn."

[Laughter.]

GLADYS MACK: No, no, not Brooklyn. Actually, the riots were so impactful and actually so severe, and I was in Brookland—Brooklyn—Brookland—and so we could actually see the smoke, and we were, what, probably 15 miles away from where the center on U Street and 14th Street and places like that.

INTERVIEWER: And at this time, Brookland was largely African American, if not all.

GLADYS MACK: Well, yes, but it was just turning over. When we bought our house, we were like one of the few African American families on our block, and most of the homes were maybe 10 years old, so it was a recently built community, and whites were moving out to other housing opportunities, and whites were moving in.

INTERVIEWER: All right. After the riots, devastation on 14th Street in particular, were you active in any of the protests and the demonstrations?

GLADYS MACK: No, not really. I—

INTERVIEWER: I assume that you weren't one of the rioters.

[Laughter.]

GLADYS MACK: Well, absolutely not. Well, remember, now, I was a Federal Government employee, I was "Hatched," [referring to the Hatch Act which bars federal employees from partisan political activities] I wasn't allowed to make a lot of noise. So, I was busy raising my family and staying away from the trouble.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. All right. So, the city—you were a Federal—like there are hundreds of thousands of Federal workers in the Washington area; not counting the military, there are 200,000 Federal workers inside our current Beltway. When you were a Federal worker then and you lived in Brookland, did you have any sense of how the government, the local city government, was run then?

GLADYS MACK: Well, it's funny you would ask that question because when I got recruited to come to Washington to work for the Government, people would ask me if I was coming to work for the Federal Government or the local government, and I said, "I don't know. The local government?"

[Laughter.]

GLADYS MACK: So my understanding at that time was it was just one big government, local and Federal, and there was no distinction, and it was interesting—

INTERVIEWER: Unfortunately, that's still true across the country.

GLADYS MACK: Right.

INTERVIEWER: People still think that.

GLADYS MACK: But it was interesting, when I did come to Washington and started working for the Federal Government, there wasn't a lot of distinction at the time because D.C. was really treated as a Federal Government agency.

INTERVIEWER: With three commissioners.

GLADYS MACK: Three commissioners, who were appointed by Congress, and the paychecks from the District government were exactly the same on the—written on the U.S. Treasury just like the Federal Government. The personnel practices were the same. Everything, all the

benefits were exactly the same as the Federal Government, and the budgets, the District government's budget was a part of the President's budget, and the hearings on the budget and the approval process was exactly the same as the Federal.

INTERVIEWER: In the late '60s, the President, President Johnson, was moving towards having appointed Mayor and commissioners.

GLADYS MACK: Exactly.

INTERVIEWER: Were you interested at all in that or did that just happen in kind of the side mirror of your life?

GLADYS MACK: Well, at that time, I was very much interested in that because, as a resident, you know, I was interested in the fact that we got to vote in national elections the first time. I think that was in the early '60s?

INTERVIEWER: 1964 was the first presidential election.

GLADYS MACK: Right. Right. But we got—right, the first presidential election, and then I was always interested in civic activity in the city, so I kept pretty—and I was always interested in news, I was kind of a news hound, so I was pretty much up on what was going on in the city at the time.

INTERVIEWER: Did you know any of the big city people at that time? Had you paid attention to Walter Washington? Or when do you recall first knowing about Walter Washington?

GLADYS MACK: Well, that's interesting. I worked for the Federal Government until—

INTERVIEWER: Maybe let's just be clear for somebody who's not—Walter Washington was the first appointed Mayor of Washington by [President] Lyndon Johnson and later ran for—but we'll get to that in a moment.

GLADYS MACK: Right. Okay. Well—

INTERVIEWER: So Walter Washington.

GLADYS MACK: Right. So, I—in 1969, I came to work for D.C. Government, and it was very interesting because I was identified by someone who worked in the Federal Government who knew the Director of Finance in the District at the time who worked for Walter Washington, Comer Coffey you may recall.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

GLADYS MACK: And one day I got this call saying, would I like to come and work for the D.C. government? And I was along a good professional path in the Federal Government, and so I said no. And then, oh, about a year or so later I got a call, another call, from the same person and said, "Well, Nixon has just become President. The Federal Government is going to change. Maybe you'll change your mind about coming to work for D.C. government." And I did. So, I came to work for D.C. government in the Budget Office and got to—because of the special interaction of budgets and, you know, the Congress and the appointed [City] council, I got to know the Mayor personally because we interacted and you know how you set the budget amounts and stuff like that.

INTERVIEWER: I don't want to dwell too long on this, but Walter Washington was appointed Mayor in 1967?

GLADYS MACK: '68.

INTERVIEWER: '68.

GLADYS MACK: I think it was '68.

INTERVIEWER: Was that before the riots? Because he was out on the streets in the riots. So, that was April. So, it had to have been that winter. So, you get to know Walter Washington and the appointed counsel, and that was Sterling Tucker, was it?

GLADYS MACK: That's correct. Sterling Tucker.

INTERVIEWER: And some other—John Hechinger?

GLADYS MACK: John Hechinger, yes, local businessman. Julius Hobson [leader of the Statehood Party].

INTERVIEWER: Julius Hobson. Do you remember what the budget was?

GLADYS MACK: Oh, gosh. I don't, but—

INTERVIEWER: Okay. You don't? I don't even know what it is either. So, let's go and move on.

GLADYS MACK: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So you got to be an integral player. Being in the Budget Office, some people think that's dull and dumb, that you just push money around, but you in fact know how money is spent on everything.

GLADYS MACK: Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: That's the heart of where the government is.

GLADYS MACK: Absolutely. And you get to know all the decision-makers on a personal basis because you interact with them all the time and you get to be very much involved in policy because, you know, as the money—as the policy goes, there goes the money, so—

INTERVIEWER: So you're working in the Budget Office of the District of Columbia. The Congress, to some people's surprise, in 1973, voted for home rule elections, actual elections.

GLADYS MACK: Exactly. Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: Walter Washington ran for Mayor, Sterling Tucker ran for Council chairman, and someone named Marion Barry.

GLADYS MACK: Right.

INTERVIEWER: You may have known him—I don't—maybe you told me this, I don't know, when you first met Marion Barry, because he was on the School Board, which is the first elective office.

GLADYS MACK: Well, right, and—

INTERVIEWER: Did you know him then?

GLADYS MACK: I did not know him then.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

GLADYS MACK: But, of course, everybody in the city felt they knew Marion Barry because he had been, of course, very, very active. When he—that was the first elected School Board, which was I think maybe one of the first citywide elections.

INTERVIEWER: By the time we elected a delegate to Congress.

GLADYS MACK: Right.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

GLADYS MACK: Yeah. Exactly.

INTERVIEWER: Did you know—when—let's just back up. When did you meet Marion Barry?

GLADYS MACK: I did not actually meet Marion Barry until he was seated on the [City] Council, and I was in the Budget Office, and so the budget—at that time, when I met Marion, I was Deputy Budget Director, so my job as Deputy Budget Director was to be responsible for managing the budget through the Council approval.

INTERVIEWER: What did you know of Marion Barry? Had he been an active civil rights person? What do you know? Had you seen—you said you didn't know him, but did you see him around town?

GLADYS MACK: Oh, absolutely, and—

INTERVIEWER: What were your first impressions?

GLADYS MACK: Well, he was just a very interesting official. He made a name for himself in so many ways. One of the—

INTERVIEWER: Did he command the room when he walked in?

GLADYS MACK: Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: Did he have that charisma that people saw later?

GLADYS MACK: He absolutely had that charisma at the time, but also I kind of paid attention to him because he was always advancing ideas that in many ways were uncomfortable for some of us who had our good steady jobs and didn't want things to be disturbed that much. So, one of the big things was the transit strike. The transportation was then provided by the private sector, as it was in most of the cities around—

INTERVIEWER: O. Roy Chalk [owner of the transit service].

GLADYS MACK: O. Roy Chalk. And the fares for the transit, streetcars and buses, were raised, and Marion started a crusade because he thought the raises were too steep, and created quite a movement of rolling back the fares, and indeed that succeeded basically. He rolled back the fares, and the funds that had been the revenue that had been brought in because of the increased fares was used to improve the transit system. So, I knew him that way, and then, of course, we knew Pride [Inc., a youth training and employment program run by Barry], and Marion Barry was just a special figure in the community. Everybody knew who he was.

INTERVIEWER: He wasn't part of the black middle class family.

GLADYS MACK: Absolutely not.

INTERVIEWER: I mean, when he first came, people called him "Bama." Everybody thinks of him as a street dude, but at some point he went from "Bama" Barry to "Street" Barry to Council and then Mayor.

GLADYS MACK: Exactly.

INTERVIEWER: But at this time, what was your impression of him?

GLADYS MACK: Well, that he was an agitator. He was always making waves, and some of them, as I said, made you feel comfortable because they were things you thought should be done, and some, well, you know, maybe he's gone a little too far on this. But let me say, my husband, who was an activist in civil rights, had known—

INTERVIEWER: Tell us his name.

GLADYS MACK: Julius Mack, had known Marion for a long time, and he was very fond of Marion and had worked with him, and I was still to be convinced that, you know, he was such a great guy that everybody was saying—

INTERVIEWER: Did he have the image then of just kind of fooling around too much, partying too much?

GLADYS MACK: Well, that was part of it, but his biggest image was that he was just really pushing the system in ways that the system wasn't happy to be pushed, and because, you know, Washington at that time had a very strong solid middle class African American community, and Marion was just really not—he didn't fit in that community very well, so he was—I think people respected him, but wanted to keep their distance from him.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, good. And on the Council, was he chairman of the Finance Committee?

GLADYS MACK: He was.

INTERVIEWER: He was.

GLADYS MACK: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: I can't believe I'm remembering a lot of this.

[Laughter.]

INTERVIEWER: All right. This helps. So, again, on both his personality and when he talked to you about the budget of the city as the Finance chairman, do you remember any interactions with him then where he either surprised you with his knowledge or surprised you because he didn't know or just because of the way he approached you? Did he try to persuade you to do things, or did he sweet-talk you? Because he could do all those things.

GLADYS MACK: Well, before we get there, I want to talk a little bit more about Julius's interaction with him.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. This is your husband.

GLADYS MACK: My husband. Of course, I was working for the Washington administration during the campaigning and all that time, and my husband was working in the Barry campaign, so he kept saying to me, "Well, you know, Marion Barry is running for Mayor, and you have got to vote for Marion Barry," and I said, "Well, I'm not voting—

INTERVIEWER: You jumped up to 1978, the Mayor's campaign.

GLADYS MACK: '75.

INTERVIEWER: But Marion—

GLADYS MACK: Oh, no, I'm sorry. Marion—did I go too fast?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, you're too far. Marion is already running the at-large Council.

GLADYS MACK: Right. Exactly.

INTERVIEWER: And then he's the Finance person.

GLADYS MACK: Right. Okay.

INTERVIEWER: But there's nothing in particular about that period before you start—

GLADYS MACK: Well, yes, because we interacted on a regular basis, and I will never forget the first budget that I presented to the Council as the, you know, manager of the city's budget before the Council. They just chopped my budget to pieces. We had taxes, we had pretty significant tax increases in the budget, and the Council said, "Oh, no—

INTERVIEWER: The Council or Barry?

GLADYS MACK: Well, Barry was heading the committee and, of course, was leading how the Council was going to react to the budget. So—

INTERVIEWER: Did you think he knew what he was doing? Did you think he was just too political?

GLADYS MACK: He knew exactly what he was doing. He had objectives for how he wanted to see the emphasis and the focus on the budget. And we got to be great colleagues at that time because he was full of questions; I was always diligent to make sure that whatever question he gave to us, we'd be able to answer them. And so, we came to respect each other for our attention to our duties.

[Laughter.]

GLADYS MACK: I'm not sure that he—well, he understood that my objective was to defend what the Mayor had presented, and even times when I might not have personally fully agreed, of course, that was never evident, but he respected my work ethic, he liked my knowledge of how things were presented and supporting the things that were before them. And actually later on, when he asked me to be in his Cabinet, he said to me, "You know, you were working for Walter Washington, and you were loyal to him, and I have no problem asking you to be in my Cabinet because I know you'll be loyal to me." And I was really—that was interesting because here was somebody who wasn't judging on personality, but was judging on whether people could get the job done.

INTERVIEWER: And he believed like Lyndon Johnson, that is, you bring people in, you don't push people out—

GLADYS MACK: Exactly.

INTERVIEWER: —which some politicians today should pay more attention to. So, the oral history is about the 1978 campaign for Mayor. You had worked for Walter Washington, were working for Walter Washington. You said your husband, Julius, favored Marion Barry.

GLADYS MACK: Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: Now, when did you first realize, whether it was whispered in the District Building or your friends told you or the Mayor's office, when did you know more than that Marion was going to run for Mayor? Do you have any sense of when you first learned that? Because I presume you were supporting Walter Washington.

GLADYS MACK: Oh, I absolutely was supporting Walter Washington. And, of course, being sensitive to the news and wanting to learn the whole what was going on in politics, there was

rumors that he was going to run for Mayor, and folks said, well, no, because he just doesn't have that level of respect in the community, he could never get elected, and also there was the thought in the African American community that the white population would never vote for him because he was too much of an antagonist, and even though he had done some good things in his community, they just—the general attitude was that this guy will never get elected.

INTERVIEWER: And why did your husband, Julius, have a relationship with him? Did they do work together?

GLADYS MACK: They had been in the [Civil Rights] Movement together, so to speak.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

GLADYS MACK: Yeah. Julius had been very active in the kind of active civil rights sector. He never left the city, but he belonged to a couple of organizations with names I can't remember right now—

INTERVIEWER: But what did he do, your husband, Julius, do for a living?

GLADYS MACK: He was a professor. He was a professor at first the Federal City College, and then UDC, professor of chemistry.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

GLADYS MACK: And that was one of the things that pulled Marion and Julius together because Marion was all but dissertation on his Ph.D., and Julius was a Ph.D.—

INTERVIEWER: In chemistry, right.

GLADYS MACK: —in chemistry. Julius was a Ph.D. in chemistry. And, in fact, back in that time, there were not many African Americans who were Ph.D.'s in chemistry, so that was kinship between them. And, you know, chemists are very analytical, they think in terms of—

INTERVIEWER: Structure.

GLADYS MACK: Exactly. And they had—and so personality-wise they were a lot alike.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember the shooting of Marion Barry that the Hanafi—and you probably—you would have been in the building.

GLADYS MACK: Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: This is Hanafi siege of 1977 when some radicals took over the District Building [city hall, later Wilson Building], it was called at the time, the Jewish—

GLADYS MACK: Hanafi Muslims, they were—

INTERVIEWER: They were—but they took over the—

GLADYS MACK: Oh, right. The Jewish community—

INTERVIEWER: It was like three different places they were.

GLADYS MACK: Yes, exactly, exactly.

INTERVIEWER: Right, the neighborhood at the—

GLADYS MACK: The neighborhood, right, exactly.

INTERVIEWER: At 17th and Rhode Island. And then the third place where they also went. Without getting a lot into that, Council Member Barry was there that day, a Howard University—a Howard Radio reporter was killed.

GLADYS MACK: Right.

INTERVIEWER: And Barry was wounded. Where were you that day?

GLADYS MACK: That was interesting. Part of what my team was doing, as Budget Director, was trying to get some automation in our budget process. Unfortunately, you know, this was the time the whole financial management systems were being developed for the first time, and on the accounting side of the financial team, they were pretty much up to speed, but on the budget side, there was very little automation. So, that afternoon, my team was out of the building in a CPA office getting a demonstration on how to get automated in the automated systems, and we kept calling back to the office, we couldn't get anybody to answer the phones. We didn't understand what was going on, and so when our meeting broke up—

INTERVIEWER: There was no tweeting and no emails and no texting at that time.

[Laughter.]

GLADYS MACK: Exactly.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So, you're off out of sight, but how did you find out that—

GLADYS MACK: When our meeting broke up, it was about five o'clock, and we started hearing the radio and the news about the District being under siege and that Marion Barry had been shot. So, that was a very, very, you know, turbulent time. And personally, all of my relatives from all over the country who knew that I worked in the building that was under siege were calling because they wanted to know if I was safe. And so it was—and then we, of course, the people who were close to Marion's—all the Cabinet members were anxious and concerned that he was okay. So, it was chaos basically.

INTERVIEWER: And the wound turned out to be not too serious, but he then recuperated at Hilda Mason's home, the Council Member Hilda Mason's home.

GLADYS MACK: Yeah, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: At this time, you were not part of the campaign—the actual running of the campaign, but not too long, I guess, after that it was very clear he was going to run for Mayor. What did your husband say about him running? He was for him, wasn't he?

GLADYS MACK: Oh, he thought it was great. He thought he would be a wonderful Mayor. He right away joined the campaign. And so he was with Barry a lot. He was kind of an escort when he would go out of town a couple of times. So, he was very present in the campaign.

INTERVIEWER: He didn't do all the things Barry did, I hope.

GLADYS MACK: I don't think so.

[Laughter.]

GLADYS MACK: I don't think so. But the whole time he was lobbying me to vote for Barry, and I said, "No, I'm not going to vote for Barry. I'm working for Washington. I'm loyal to Washington. I'm going to vote for him."

INTERVIEWER: Where did Sterling Tucker fit in all of this?

GLADYS MACK: Well, Sterling, as chair of the Council, had a number of citizens who respected him, and, of course, he was head of the Urban League, and folks knew and respected Sterling. And, in fact, Sterling was part of kind of the African American, the solid citizens I'm talking about, but upper middle class kind of—

INTERVIEWER: The basic Washington upper middle class.

GLADYS MACK: Yeah, right. So, he was probably in that group. So, Sterling had quite a following as well. And because Marion had this reputation of a very active social life—

INTERVIEWER: That's a very polite way to put it.

[Laughter.]

INTERVIEWER: Can you say more about that?

GLADYS MACK: Well, a little bit more about that. He did have a reputation of being a womanizer, and there was a lot of questions about whether or not he could overcome that reputation. But I will never forget, as the campaign was hot and heavy, there was information in the press that perhaps Sterling Tucker was a womanizer as well.

[Laughter.]

GLADYS MACK: And that kind of balanced off the complaints about Marion.

INTERVIEWER: And, of course, Barry had—Marion Barry had married Effi Barry at that time.

GLADYS MACK: Well, he met—right, after he—because he married her like right after the election.

INTERVIEWER: Just before the campaign.

GLADYS MACK: Yeah—no, just before the campaign. In the summer, right.

INTERVIEWER: He married—because in the famous book called *Dream City*, the marriage was in part done because of that.

GLADYS MACK: Yeah, that's correct.

INTERVIEWER: So Ivanhoe Donaldson [Barry's campaign manager in 1978] thought that he wouldn't be good to run as a single man.

GLADYS MACK: Exactly. *Dream City*, in which I have a picture I'm proud to say.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So, you have a husband who's a professor of the very class we talk about, the proud middle and upper income class here, who's for Marion Barry, the street guy, who is trying to run over Walter Washington and Sterling Tucker. You're working for Walter Washington and you had to deal with Sterling Tucker on the budget.

GLADYS MACK: Exactly.

INTERVIEWER: So it was a lot of fun.

GLADYS MACK: Yeah, it was.

[Laughter.]

INTERVIEWER: It was. So, the election is played. Where did you live at this time with your husband in 1978?

GLADYS MACK: Actually, I lived in Northwest Washington.

INTERVIEWER: Where precisely?

GLADYS MACK: Okay. I lived in—I forget the name of my community. Isn't that terrible? But I was right on Rock Creek Park—

INTERVIEWER: In Ward 4?

GLADYS MACK: In Ward 3 at the time.

INTERVIEWER: In Ward 3. Oh.

GLADYS MACK: In fact, it got redistricted in 2010—

INTERVIEWER: To Ward 4.

GLADYS MACK: To Ward 4. And I was unhappy to leave Ward 3 because I was a proud citizen of Ward 3.

INTERVIEWER: So there you are in this very—as we all know, Marion Barry won with just 30-something percent of the vote, barely beating Walter Washington and Sterling Tucker in the race, and I'm going to get into the shenanigans of the campaign in an effort to get one another out. But what were you thinking then? The *Washington Post* that year, you know, endorsed Barry repeatedly. What were you thinking either at the tail end of the campaign when no one knew who was going to win? Did you think Barry was going to win? Did you think Walter Washington had it? And what did you think the night of the election? Were you at Walter Washington's the night of the election?

GLADYS MACK: Well, no, because there was another development before the election took place. As I told you, my husband continued to lobby me to vote for Marion Barry, and I finally gave in. I said, "Okay, I'm tired of you just bugging me about voting for Marion Barry. Maybe he'll be okay, so I'm going to vote for him." And I did.

[Laughter.]

GLADYS MACK: So—

INTERVIEWER: You didn't tell Walter Washington.

GLADYS MACK: I didn't tell Walter Washington that. But that was so interesting because, skipping ahead a little bit, an anecdote, at the first anniversary of Marion's Mayor the first year, the insiders gave a birthday party, and they invited all the people that they thought were in the campaign and who had voted for Marion. So, they came up to me and said, "Well, we didn't invite you because we know you didn't vote for Marion." I said, "But I did, I voted for him."

[Laughter.]

GLADYS MACK: So that was fun.

INTERVIEWER: Well, and, again, we won't talk about the campaign because you were not in it, but at what point, when Marion Barry won the primary that September and there was no—any specific opposition by a Republican, but there was no doubt he was going to be the next Mayor come January 2nd.

GLADYS MACK: Oh, absolutely, absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: There was a transition.

GLADYS MACK: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: And you were involved in the transition?

GLADYS MACK: No. I was a government employee, remember, so—

INTERVIEWER: Government employee? But sometimes government employees are loaned to a transition to help them and all that.

GLADYS MACK: Yeah, but, no, I didn't—

INTERVIEWER: But did you—how did you deal with At-Large Council Member Mayor-elect Marion Barry in the fall of 1978?

GLADYS MACK: Well, let me tell you what happened. In that fall, my boss—in the fall of '78, right.

INTERVIEWER: After the election.

GLADYS MACK: Exactly. My boss, who was Comer Coffey, left D.C. to go to New York to work for the—what was it called? The Big Mac or whatever? Because New York was—

INTERVIEWER: Oh, yeah, the structural turnaround.

GLADYS MACK: Exactly, right. And I got named Acting in Comer's place by the transition people.

INTERVIEWER: Acting Budget Director.

GLADYS MACK: Yeah. Acting Finance Director over the whole 9 yards. And—

INTERVIEWER: By Barry—

GLADYS MACK: Yeah, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: They picked you.

GLADYS MACK: They did, yeah. So—because they had won and—

INTERVIEWER: Did you talk to Marion Barry about that?

GLADYS MACK: Well, I talked to Marion Barry—

INTERVIEWER: Mayor-elect Barry.

GLADYS MACK: Mayor-elect Barry, right. That was the conversation, about why he wanted me to serve in his Cabinet, because he knew I would be loyal to him, because I was a loyal person.

INTERVIEWER: You had fought fairly—

GLADYS MACK: Right.

INTERVIEWER: You had fought fairly and you had been loyal to Walter Washington.

GLADYS MACK: Exactly.

INTERVIEWER: Although you weren't loyal to him because you voted for Barry, but we won't get into that.

[Laughter.]

GLADYS MACK: That's right, but, you know, nobody knows what you do when you go in and close the door, so—

[Laughter.]

INTERVIEWER: So what was that period like?

GLADYS MACK: Well, that was a tough period because D.C. was embarking on its first financial audit at that time because, you know, Walter [Washington] really was kind of a gatekeeper that first 4 years. Not much happened. The part—there were dates when the District would begin to look more like a city than like the Federal Government, and those dates pretty much fell after Marion had gotten elected. So, Walter kind of kept the fires burning, the home fires burning, while the city went into transformation.

INTERVIEWER: But we found out in that audit that the city was not financially very well off.

GLADYS MACK: Well, that's correct, but it wasn't well off because in fact the city had never had an audit by certified accountants because it was just treated like a Federal agency. You know, Federal agencies never get audited, I mean, they get audited piece by piece, but the Federal Government doesn't get audited. And so, we had never had an audit. So, at the time the turnover came with a new Mayor, the audit was underway. It had started under Walter and then it was in full steam when Marion came in, and then the announcement came that, first of all, that the books were unauditible, and so there was a kind of a financial position and statement issued, and that was when the \$267 million deficit was revealed, and—

INTERVIEWER: Right. As far as people could tell, that's how much it was.

GLADYS MACK: As far as they could tell, right, exactly.

INTERVIEWER: All right. Well, let me—I don't want to go too fast on this. I want to go back to the election was very close, Barry barely won, he goes into his transition. He's pretty aggressive about being—transition with the things he wants to do—

GLADYS MACK: Oh, absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: —and he's excited, and everyone is very happy. On January—I think it was January 2nd at high noon was the inauguration. Did you go?

GLADYS MACK: Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: And your husband, of course, went.

GLADYS MACK: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Where were you?

GLADYS MACK: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Now, was that the one they moved inside? I can't remember. Let me ask the unspoken person to my right.

BETTY KING: It was in the Council chambers.

INTERVIEWER: It was in the Council chambers.

GLADYS MACK: Yeah, yeah, right.

BETTY KING: Thurgood Marshall.

INTERVIEWER: Thurgood Marshall.

GLADYS MACK: Yes, exactly.

INTERVIEWER: We have great pictures of that.

GLADYS MACK: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: You were in the Council chambers?

GLADYS MACK: I was in the Council chambers.

INTERVIEWER: Were you up front or were you in the back?

GLADYS MACK: I was not up front, and I barely—and I know where I was in the picture, but my face doesn't show.

[Laughter.]

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And where was your husband?

GLADYS MACK: In the back somewhere, and he was not—

BETTY KING: The people behind Marion were his Cabinet.

INTERVIEWER: That's Betty King speaking.

BETTY KING: I was in the audience, and Julius was as well.

GLADYS MACK: Yeah, okay, okay, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever have a personal conversation with Marion Barry or Walter Washington about the loss, about Walter Washington's loss, or Barry winning? Or was it always professional with you?

GLADYS MACK: Marion and I were friends, so we had conversations that were personal, and we talked about what he wanted in, you know, his Cabinet, what he was looking for. And so we had general conversations.

INTERVIEWER: Do you know what he thought about Walter Washington? You know, during the campaign he called him stumbling, bumbling, Walter Washington administration, and "Take a Stand" I think was the '78 slogan, "Take a Stand"? I'm pretty sure it was, not the second one, but the first one. I mean, traditional Washington that you described—

GLADYS MACK: Right.

INTERVIEWER: —your solid middle and upper income African Americans and families—

GLADYS MACK: Yep.

INTERVIEWER: —suddenly had this street activist.

GLADYS MACK: Right, exactly.

[Laughter.]

INTERVIEWER: What were the thoughts either from people around you or family members or friends?

GLADYS MACK: Well, I never had a—

INTERVIEWER: Now he's going to be Mayor. What did they think?

GLADYS MACK: Well, I never had a discussion with Walter Washington about it, but my boss, Comer Coffey, and I talked about it, and he was pretty enthusiastic about Marion. Most of the people who knew him and who had watched him operate had a lot of respect for his intellect. He was clearly really one of the smartest guys you would ever know. And he cared about the people and he wanted to improve the city. And, you know, whether you were a fan of his or not, that pretty much came through. And the thing that I think was Marion's greatest asset was his courage. I mean, you know, he just—he was—he would see a way to change and to transform, and I think that showed. So, people forgave the gossip that was going on about him and the fact that he was a militant and, you know, was part of Stokely Carmichael's [activist in the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and later leader of the Black Panthers]—I mean, all that kind of—when you got before him, and he really could capture you with his goals of what he wanted to achieve and how he was going to do it, and he just did that generally.

INTERVIEWER: Were characterized by most people that he was good both in the sweets and in the streets.

GLADYS MACK: And in the streets. I like that. That's true.

[Laughter.]

INTERVIEWER: That pretty much says it.

GLADYS MACK: Pretty much.

INTERVIEWER: [President] Bill Clinton-esque, the way he can look at you and make you think anything else doesn't matter, "We're talking and that's all that matters."

GLADYS MACK: Absolutely, absolutely. And he said to me one time that he'd say somebody would come up to him and, you know, they would be complimenting and all that, and they would walk away, and he would say, "Who was that?"

[Laughter.]

INTERVIEWER: Who's that?

GLADYS MACK: And he would—

[Laughter.]

INTERVIEWER: He would say, "Who was that?" That's right. "Who was that who was so nice to me?"

GLADYS MACK: Exactly, yeah, yeah.

[Laughter.]

INTERVIEWER: Right. But they would never know that he maybe didn't remember their name and just—

GLADYS MACK: Well, exactly.

INTERVIEWER: And for that moment, which is also true, it's not just fate. For that moment, he does only care about you.

GLADYS MACK: Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: That's also true of Bill Clinton.

GLADYS MACK: Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: I always said those two guys were like separated at birth.

GLADYS MACK: Well, you know, everybody says that Bill Clinton was the first black president.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, first black president.

[Laughter.]

GLADYS MACK: Until he was running against Obama, and then we better change our minds.

[Laughter.]

INTERVIEWER: Well, listen, I want to just kind of wrap this up with just asking you, we all know that the turbulent next three terms, and then the fourth term that came along, and you've been all active in making lives better for thousands of people in town. Do you think that it was worth it for Barry to have been Mayor and that Walter Washington didn't win in 1978? What would have been—you can't possibly know, but what do you feel might had it been like had Barry not won?

GLADYS MACK: Oh, there's no doubt in my mind that Barry's win was incredible for the city, and it goes back to the vision. I mean, he was a guy who just had vision and courage to live up—live out his vision, and there are just so many examples of that.

INTERVIEWER: Well, let's go to one of them.

GLADYS MACK: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: One of the things, whenever people want to criticize Barry for the things he didn't do or the things he did do that weren't good—

GLADYS MACK: Right.

INTERVIEWER: —he opened the doors of the city government—

GLADYS MACK: Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: —to people—

GLADYS MACK: —like me.

INTERVIEWER: —like you.

[Laughter.]

GLADYS MACK: Exactly. And—

INTERVIEWER: Tell me a little about how that must have felt, from being one of four African Americans being recruited into the Federal Government, which virtually at that time was white, and then the Walter Washington government, which was pretty white itself—

GLADYS MACK: Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: —because a lot of people predated him being there, you now have somebody who says, "This is our government."

GLADYS MACK: Absolutely, absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: Tell me about that.

GLADYS MACK: Let me tell you, that was the best feeling in the world, and not only was I just overwhelmed that I had been selected to this high Cabinet position, but Marion Barry had the best—he had assembled the most incredible group of African Americans that anybody could put together, and a lot of these people had never been heard of before, but they had been off doing good things in other places. And, you know, there was Elijah Rogers [Barry's first City Administrator], Ivanhoe Donaldson [Barry's campaign manager in 1978 who later held several

positions in his Cabinet], Jim Gibson [Deputy Mayor for Planning in the first Barry administration], and on and on—

BETTY KING: Carroll Harvey [also a Deputy Mayor].

GLADYS MACK: Carroll Harvey. Very accomplished blacks who were now just doing a fantastic job at transforming the city, and the *Washington Post* even wrote a story, an editorial, about this government and how different it was, and for me, a black woman, just seeing all of these wonderful black men in charge of things and running everything was just fantastic.

INTERVIEWER: And also the African American men and women who had businesses in the city who were shut out by the unions, shut out by the Board of Trade, shut out by the Congress, those windows and doors opened.

GLADYS MACK: Absolutely. Absolutely. They did. And, you know, it's to his memorial—or his funeral, you know, last year, it was amazing that most of—a lot of those people came forward to talk about how he had opened up businesses and all the millionaires and super millionaires that had been created because of Barry's policies. One of the richest of all was Bob Johnson [founder of Black Entertainment Television], of course, and he just—he changed the city entirely. One of the issues, one of the problems, was that given what happened in his successive terms, a lot of that just kind of fell apart because there was nothing to keep—his reputation was sagging, and there was nothing to keep it together.

INTERVIEWER: I was going to say, all of the excitement, and, again, we're not going to talk about all the 4 years, but we saw his failure in terms of his personal—I always say that the one thing Marion Barry didn't have is personal discipline.

GLADYS MACK: Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: It wasn't his greed, there was no greed, his failures, just in terms of philander, you know, fooling around, women, other people, it's a matter of discipline. But I just want to summarize these two things. When he was arrested at the Vista Hotel [for smoking crack cocaine with a woman not his wife], what did you think about that?

GLADYS MACK: Oh, that was just a sad time for everybody, absolutely. Rumors were around that Marion was involved in illegal drugs, and it got more than rumors. I mean, it was talked about. And fooling around everywhere.

INTERVIEWER: And it seemed sometimes where he didn't seem to be there.

GLADYS MACK: Exactly, exactly. But—and he even talked to me once, and he said, you know, "I want to go get some help, but I can't get away from the press. Everywhere I go, they're on

my—and so if I go, that's going to be a terrible, terrible story, and so I'm just—I don't know what to do." So, he was aware, of course, that he needed help, but he just didn't see a way out. And the arrest at the Vista was just the ultimate travesty of all of this thing because certainly he was trying to do better, and just the personal discipline, as you say, just did not allow him to.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I think we have covered quite a bit in 52 minutes and 13 seconds, we're hoping it recorded. So, is there anything, summary, dealings, that you've thought about that I didn't ask you or that you are now thinking as you think back? One of the reasons this oral history is being done is because Betty King said, and others in the group said, for those who were there in 1978 and who helped carry Barry to victory, it was one of the most exhilarating, important socially, for all the things that would come afterwards, in their lives, not that they haven't done other great things or done any interesting things—

GLADYS MACK: Right. Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: —but this was a singular moment not only for the city, but for the people who were in the campaign.

GLADYS MACK: Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: And—

BETTY KING: And the transition.

GLADYS MACK: And—yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Just the whole things changed when he became Mayor and all the good things get washed out when the bad things get reported.

GLADYS MACK: Right.

INTERVIEWER: In this oral history, what does Barry mean to the District of Washington?

GLADYS MACK: Before I answer that, let me just give you one more little anecdote that was really important to me. At the time of the election, there were two or three really important policy issues on the table. One of them was the approval of the lottery, and the other one was the size of the police force. And I'll just deal with those two. Congressman Natcher, who had been chair of the District Committee in the Congress from Kentucky, was very protective of the city, and he said that the police force ought to be—I think it was like 38, 48, some number of police officers, and the city was not embracing that idea because it was too expensive and we said, you know, we have all these other police forces, and we don't need the police force to be any bigger. And on the same hand, the lottery had been—the idea of the lottery had been

introduced, and it was not too popular. So, there were the Ward 3, the white community, thought that it was terrible to bring the lottery to the Nation's capital. And so Marion, feeling that on the side that we really had enough police officers and also feeling that we needed to get the lottery through, he decided that in order to get the lottery done, we were going to go meet with every person on the Appropriations Committee and plead our case to them.

So, I will never forget, [Congressman] Jamie Whitten was chair of the Appropriations Committee in the House, he's from Mississippi, and so he was one of the first persons that we went to talk to. As we sat there, the three of us, probably—he had a staff there, maybe four people in the room—he talked about the Marion Barry that he knew, and it was fascinating. He knew—he talked about how Marion was on the Capitol steps and, you know, the outcome of that, and he congratulated him for the activity and how he had been making advances in terms of representing the people, and I'm just stunned. I'm sitting here listening to this Congressman from Mississippi congratulating Marion Barry and becoming aware that he had been watching everything that Marion had been doing. So, that was just really interesting. And then we went to see Senator Bumpers from somewhere and—

INTERVIEWER: Arkansas.

GLADYS MACK: Yes. And we were promoting the lottery. And, I don't know, we must have gone to six or eight offices of just key congressional people, and imagine here I am, I'm sitting here in the offices of all these really important people, and it was just fascinating, it was just wonderful.

INTERVIEWER: A Congress that you really had virtually nothing to do with even though you had a Federal job. It is a remarkable change for—he integrated not only the city government, he integrated the city government with the Congress, that we were real people.

GLADYS MACK: Right, exactly. And just one more thing I would say. On one of those visits to the Hill, he said—we would ride in the same car, and he said, "You know, Ms. Mack," we were on our way back, he says, "Well, I have to make one stop." And so we stopped at a birthday party, it was a Gertrude Stein [the gay/lesbian Democratic Club] birthday party, and, of course, that was just amazing to me. I had never been in a room with that many gay people.

[Laughter.]

GLADYS MACK: So I said, "Oh, my gosh, that's amazing." But it just showed how—this was way back—how supportive he has always been, you know, equality for all. I mean, he—

INTERVIEWER: He could go in anybody's room and feel at home.

GLADYS MACK: Anybody's room, and it just—right. And I have to say this, at his [funeral] service, all of those disciplines, cultures, all of those populations—well, you were there, and so you know—did you speak? I think you spoke. There were so many speakers.

INTERVIEWER: I did not speak.

GLADYS MACK: Oh, okay.

INTERVIEWER: Bruce Johnson [TV reporter] spoke.

GLADYS MACK: Bruce Johnson spoke, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Not as well as I would have.

GLADYS MACK: Well, I'm sure that's true. But all those people came together in that one room, and that was just fascinating, because it was a tabloid of Marion Barry's life.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. It could be what the country would be if we would just do it.

GLADYS MACK: Absolutely. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you, Gladys Mack—

GLADYS MACK: Thank you.

INTERVIEWER: —who was in the creation of the local D.C. government.

GLADYS MACK: Thank you very much. My pleasure.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you. 58 minutes and 17 seconds.

GLADYS MACK: Okay.

[Begin audio file part 2 of 2.]

INTERVIEWER: Okay. This is a second and very short section of this. Tom Sherwood here from Channel 4 News. I was talking to Gladys Mack, and the one question I didn't ask her, when we talked about Barry's extracurricular activities, as she said, I said, "Well, did Marion Barry ever come on to you?" And your answer is?

GLADYS MACK: Well, no, he actually didn't. And, in fact, I have this wonderful story. Ginna Fleming, who has also been interviewed for this research, and I worked together, and Ginna

and I used to tease each other because we used to say that, you know, there must be something wrong with us because Marion Barry has tried to hit on everybody else, but he never tried to hit on us.

[Laughter.]

INTERVIEWER: Well, maybe he knew your husband, Julius.

GLADYS MACK: Right, and he knew Ginna's husband.

[Laughter.]

INTERVIEWER: That's right.

GLADYS MACK: Yeah. So, that was fun. We joke about that.

INTERVIEWER: All right. Thank you very much.